

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 12, 2004

The Honorable Preeta Bansal
Chair
U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
800 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite #790
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairwoman Bansal:

Congratulations on your recent assumption of this important position of chair of the International Religious Freedom Commission. You have served with distinction on the Commission, and we appreciate all you do to advance its important work.

Given the Commission's mandate to monitor religious persecution and promote freedom of persecution worldwide, we are writing with regards to the Commission's efforts in monitoring anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism fans the flames of hatred and is inimical to the values of a free and open society. Recognizing this fact, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe recently concluded its Berlin Conference on anti-Semitism, its second conference on this important issue.

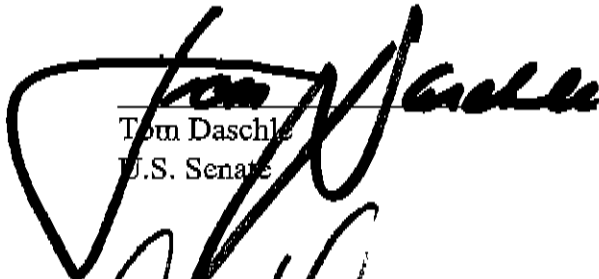
At the conclusion of the Berlin Conference, member states unanimously endorsed a plan of action to fight anti-Semitism entitled the "Berlin Declaration." In endorsing that Declaration, OSCE member states not only condemned all manifestations of anti-Semitism, but also committed to take concrete steps to promote tolerance and non-discrimination, including, but not limited to, ensuring that legal systems counter anti-Semitic harassment, promoting educational programs to combat anti-Semitism as well as remembrance of and education about the tragedy of the Holocaust, combating hate crimes and maintaining reliable information and statistics about anti-Semitic crimes.

The Berlin Declaration is an important step forward in our fight against anti-Semitism. In the hopes of ensuring that OSCE member states aggressively follow through on the steps outlined in it, we request that the Commission, under your leadership, monitor and periodically report to Congress on the actions taken by OSCE member states to comply with the goals outlined in the Declaration. As with your efforts to monitor religious freedom around the world, your work on this important effort will shine an important light on how the world's leading democracies are confronting the age old threat of intolerance and anti-Semitism.

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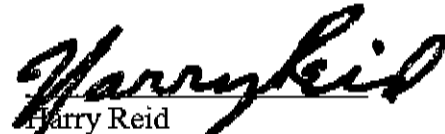
Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Daschle".

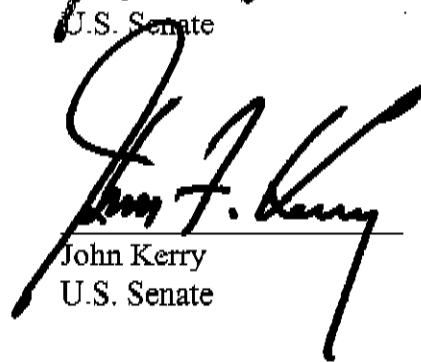
Tom Daschle
U.S. Senate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Levin".

Carl Levin
U.S. Senate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Reid".

Harry Reid
U.S. Senate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Kerry".

John Kerry
U.S. Senate